



# COUNTY OF SOMERSET DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

## RICHARD HALL COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

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7/19/17

### *The CHAP Program at Richard Hall CMHC*

The Children's Hope Afterschool Program (CHAP) initially started in 2015 as an intensive after school therapeutic program which focused on each individual's right to be able to identify, practice, and utilize resources and skills that help them work towards self-determination, wellness, and recovery. The target population for CHAP is middle and high school age youth who are struggling due to life stressors and a myriad of other issues. Behavioral, emotional, and social impairments contribute to disturbance in academic and developmental progress, as well as family and interpersonal relationships. CHAP offers youth the opportunity to overcome these obstacles and create new lasting relationships that will support their recovery.

With the support provided by the Children's Hope Initiative (CHI), CHAP has provided services to over 150 unduplicated youth and their families since beginning in 2015. As a program we continuously strive to serve our community and the youth to the best of our ability and we find our flexibility to be a great strength. We have learned that group therapy is what children and adolescents want and have found it to be a helpful treatment modality. Rather than having to commit to a strict schedule and program, the proposal for 2017 was to offer a variety of groups for younger children, adolescents and older teens that they can attend based on the particular need that brings them to the center and what works in their schedules. Since implementing our new a la carte group menu we have noticed an increased commitment by children as well as their families in certain groups. The current groups that we offer include Tween Yoga, Social Butterflies (a social skills group for 8-10 year olds), and Teen Coping Skills. With the support provided by the Children's Hope Initiative (CHI), we have been able to implement yoga instruction into all three of the groups offered to our youth. We currently have 3 children enrolled in the Tween Yoga group as some of the earlier members decided to take off during the summer. Many youth have also indicated that without exposure to yoga through CHAP, this is not a skill they would have had the opportunity to learn. We currently have 9 members in our Social Butterflies Group, and the most utilized adolescent group Teen Coping Skills has 15 members enrolled. With the feedback we have received from parents and the children, there is a documented change in the youth's ability to use the healthy coping skills that they learn in these groups as well as out in the world.

In Case of a Psychiatric Emergency  
Please contact Psychiatric Emergency Screening Services  
908-526-4100

- Mission Statement -

The County of Somerset is committed to excellence and innovation in public service, promoting the well-being of all residents and communities by providing effective, efficient and responsive leadership.

*Somerset County Is An Equal Opportunity Employer*

Although we found group therapy to be one of our most valuable modalities of treatment, we began planning something a little different than what we have been able to do in the past. The staff at Richard Hall began building a Health and Wellness Respite Camp for children ages 9-13 who have experienced abuse, neglect and or trauma in their lives. We have created a camp that gives children the tools to assist them in all areas of their lives, and to have FUN while doing it. The camp has two cycles, the first being from July 10<sup>th</sup>-July 28<sup>th</sup> and the second will run from July 31<sup>st</sup>-August 18<sup>th</sup>. We accepted referrals from Somerset County DCP&P, the Tri-County CMO, as well as other community agencies. The camp currently runs on Monday from 9:00am-2:30pm, Wednesdays from 10am-2pm, and Fridays from 10am-2pm. We currently have 7 active participants in the first cycle and 11 registrants for the second cycle. We wanted the camp to be a small camp providing each youth with an individualized experience.

We wanted to ensure that while providing the youth with tools we were addressing mind and body, as evidence shows the interconnectedness of our physical and mental health is undeniable. Each day the camp is broken up into various activities, including Karate, Yoga and meditation, Equine Therapy, Physical fitness training and conditioning, Art Therapy, and a Certified Nutritionist to assist with healthier meals and snacks. The last session of Karate will be 7/26/17 and all members will keep the Gi that was purchased for them and will graduate as a Yellow belt. Fitness training occurs every Monday from 9:00 am to 2:30 pm. In a gym in Keyport, NJ the children are being challenged with strength and conditioning training by professionals who also train current NFL players and D1 collegiate athletes. Thus far we have only received positive feedback from our youth and their parents about the activities we are doing and the children arrive enthusiastic every day.

CHAP continues to be committed to providing youth and their families with a well-rounded program that can offer a variety of different therapeutic modalities to ensure that each youth is getting an individualized program to meet their needs. We are an evolving program and dedicated to bringing new and innovative evidenced based practices to the program as opportunities arise. Our hope is to incorporate components of the camp into our regular programing in the fall, and we are already beginning to think about next year's camp if given the opportunity. Thank you for the opportunity in allowing us to continue to work with Somerset County adolescents and their families in the CHAP program.